



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ambassador Philip Remler, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 12, 2010

The United States warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council, Ambassador Remler.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova continues to play an essential role in efforts to broker a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict, helping this year to establish a more robust settlement process. As you noted in your report, the 5+2, which now meets regularly on an informal basis, and participants are addressing issues of importance to both sides. The sides' chief negotiators meet often, and additional, higher-level dialogue is taking place. We commend the tangible results achieved thus far, including the resumption of rail traffic between Chisinau and Odessa – and hopefully, resumption of telephone connections – and also hope to see further concrete progress, particularly in the expert-level working groups.

The United States remains committed to the earliest possible resumption of formal negotiations in the 5+2 format and looks forward to a settlement that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova and provides for an agreed status for the Transnistria region. We hope to agree at our Summit in December to intensify efforts to resolve this conflict and others in the OSCE region. We also reiterate the importance of resolving issues related to the freedom of movement of people and goods between both banks.

While facilitating the conflict resolution process, the Mission can provide valuable advice and expertise as Moldova builds a democratic and prosperous European state. We commend the Mission's efforts to promote the rule of law, police reform, freedom of assembly, and anti-trafficking. We also commend the Mission's support for the destruction of surplus munitions and the reintegration of retired military personnel into civilian life. Additionally, we note that the Mission has rightly encouraged the Government of Moldova to follow a responsible, constitutional course to resolve domestic political uncertainties. We encourage the Government of Moldova to take steps to ensure that the November 28 parliamentary elections fully meet OSCE and international election standards and that all citizens on both sides of the river have free access to polling stations. The recommendations contained in recent OSCE/ODIHR reports can provide useful guidelines for further improving Moldova's electoral system.

Turning to another important issue, the arrest and continued detention of journalist Ernest Vardanean and other arrests and detentions in the Transnistria region remain a matter of deep concern. We continue to urge respect for human rights, due process, and the rule of law in all cases. We encourage the Mission's continued monitoring of the situation and its efforts to secure the application of these fundamental rights. We welcome the Mission's regular updates.

Allow me to thank you and your staff, Ambassador Remler, and reiterate our support for the Mission's excellent work. Allow me also to reiterate my government's commitment to

working with Moldova as it continues its integration into European institutions. Respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms – indeed, for the full range of OSCE and international commitments – will continue to be key elements in our relationship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.